

Notice of Allowability	Application No.	Applicant(s)	
	09/995,791	MAERTENS ET AL.	
	Examiner Mary E. Mosher, Ph.D.	Art Unit 1648	

-- The MAILING DATE of this communication appears on the cover sheet with the correspondence address--

All claims being allowable, PROSECUTION ON THE MERITS IS (OR REMAINS) CLOSED in this application. If not included herewith (or previously mailed), a Notice of Allowance (PTOL-85) or other appropriate communication will be mailed in due course. **THIS NOTICE OF ALLOWABILITY IS NOT A GRANT OF PATENT RIGHTS.** This application is subject to withdrawal from issue at the initiative of the Office or upon petition by the applicant. See 37 CFR 1.313 and MPEP 1308.

1. This communication is responsive to 3/28/05, 3/17/05, 1/3/05.
2. The allowed claim(s) is/are 29,31,33,35,36 and 40-51.
3. The drawings filed on 29 November 2001 are accepted by the Examiner.
4. Acknowledgment is made of a claim for foreign priority under 35 U.S.C. § 119(a)-(d) or (f).
 - a) All
 - b) Some*
 - c) None
 of the:
 1. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received.
 2. Certified copies of the priority documents have been received in Application No. _____.
 3. Copies of the certified copies of the priority documents have been received in this national stage application from the International Bureau (PCT Rule 17.2(a)).

* Certified copies not received: _____.

Applicant has THREE MONTHS FROM THE "MAILING DATE" of this communication to file a reply complying with the requirements noted below. Failure to timely comply will result in ABANDONMENT of this application.
THIS THREE-MONTH PERIOD IS NOT EXTENDABLE.

5. A SUBSTITUTE OATH OR DECLARATION must be submitted. Note the attached EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT or NOTICE OF INFORMAL PATENT APPLICATION (PTO-152) which gives reason(s) why the oath or declaration is deficient.
6. CORRECTED DRAWINGS (as "replacement sheets") must be submitted.
 - (a) including changes required by the Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948) attached
 - 1) hereto or 2) to Paper No./Mail Date _____.
 - (b) including changes required by the attached Examiner's Amendment / Comment or in the Office action of Paper No./Mail Date _____.
7. DEPOSIT OF and/or INFORMATION about the deposit of BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL must be submitted. Note the attached Examiner's comment regarding REQUIREMENT FOR THE DEPOSIT OF BIOLOGICAL MATERIAL.

Attachment(s)

1. Notice of References Cited (PTO-892)
2. Notice of Draftsperson's Patent Drawing Review (PTO-948)
3. Information Disclosure Statements (PTO-1449 or PTO/SB/08),
Paper No./Mail Date 3/17/05, 8/25/04
4. Examiner's Comment Regarding Requirement for Deposit
of Biological Material
5. Notice of Informal Patent Application (PTO-152)
6. Interview Summary (PTO-413),
Paper No./Mail Date _____.
7. Examiner's Amendment/Comment
8. Examiner's Statement of Reasons for Allowance
9. Other _____.

Art Unit: 1648

EXAMINER'S AMENDMENT

A request for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, including the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e), was filed in this application after final rejection. Since this application is eligible for continued examination under 37 CFR 1.114, and the fee set forth in 37 CFR 1.17(e) has been timely paid, the finality of the previous Office action has been withdrawn pursuant to 37 CFR 1.114. Applicant's submission filed on 3/17/2005 and 3/28/2005 has been entered.

An examiner's amendment to the record appears below. Should the changes and/or additions be unacceptable to applicant, an amendment may be filed as provided by 37 CFR 1.312. To ensure consideration of such an amendment, it MUST be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee.

The application has been amended as follows:

In the specification, page 77, line 15, change "(WO 99/67285)" to "(WO 99/67285, US Patent 6,635,257)"

The following is an examiner's statement of reasons for allowance:

Applicant requested clarification in regard to the statement on page 5 of the Office action mailed 12/17/2004 that claims "would be allowable if rewritten to overcome the rejections under 35 USC 112, 2nd paragraph...and to include all of the limitations of the base claim and any intervening claims." The reference to nonexistent 112 2nd rejections appears to have been an error.

In prior art such as Esumi et al which teaches protection of chimps from HCV, the E1 protein in the composition was not subjected to any treatments such that it would

Art Unit: 1648

meet the claim requirement for being “a single or specific oligomeric protein not disulfide linked with contaminants.” In prior such as WO 99/67285, the protein composition is taught, suggested for prophylactic immunization; and shown to induce a beneficial immune response in chimps already chronically infected with HCV. However, the prior art does not indicate that the composition recited in the claims would, with reasonable expectation of success, prevent chronic infection when administered before challenge, as demonstrated by applicants using the chimpanzee, the accepted animal model for human HCV infection.

The review by Forns et al (not available as prior art) is cited as of interest in illustrating the ordinary skill of the art at approximately the time of the invention. Note is made of passage on page 688, second column, where applicant's publications regarding E1 compositions are cited, together with the comment “The study of the efficacy of this E1 protein as a prophylactic HCV vaccine candidate in the chimpanzee model is needed.” This comment indicates that those skilled in the art would have viewed unverified predictions of efficacy as having less than a reasonable expectation of success.

Any comments considered necessary by applicant must be submitted no later than the payment of the issue fee and, to avoid processing delays, should preferably accompany the issue fee. Such submissions should be clearly labeled “Comments on Statement of Reasons for Allowance.”

Any inquiry concerning this communication or earlier communications from the examiner should be directed to Mary E. Mosher, Ph.D. whose telephone number is 571-272-0906. The examiner can normally be reached on M-T and alternate F.

If attempts to reach the examiner by telephone are unsuccessful, the examiner's supervisor, James Housel can be reached on 571-272-0902. The fax phone number for the organization where this application or proceeding is assigned is 703-872-9306.

Information regarding the status of an application may be obtained from the Patent Application Information Retrieval (PAIR) system. Status information for published applications may be obtained from either Private PAIR or Public PAIR. Status information for unpublished applications is available through Private PAIR only. For more information about the PAIR system, see <http://pair-direct.uspto.gov>. Should you have questions on access to the Private PAIR system, contact the Electronic Business Center (EBC) at 866-217-9197 (toll-free).

6/7/05


MARY E. MOSHER, PH.D.
PRIMARY EXAMINER